

Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4305

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY RABAT

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KINSHASA 5992

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR CG MOPS

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH MOBUTU: POST-SHABA DEVELOPMENTS

REF: KINSHASA 5910

1. SUMMARY: DURING PRIVATE MEETING JUNE 25, MOBUTU INDICATED HE DID NOT ANTICIPATE ANOTHER SHABA ATTACK IN NEAR FUTURE. HE WAS PESSIMISTIC, HOWEVER, ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR EARLY NORMALIZATION OF ZAIRE-ANGOLA RELATIONS. HE PREDICTED INCREASING INSTABILITY IN ANGOLA, NOTING NETO'S TROUBLES WITHIN MPLA AND WITH GROWING THREAT FROM UNITA. HE CONFIRMED THAT OTHER AFRICAN MODERATES HAD AGREED TO RAISE SHABA AT OAU SUMMIT, THUS ENABLING ZAIRE TO MAKE ITS CASE. MOBUTU SAID THAT AFTER OAU HE WOULD CONTINUE HIS
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VISITS TO OTHER COUNTRIES TO THANK THEM FOR HELP IN REPELLING SHABA INVASION, AND IN THIS CONTEXT HE NOTED POINTEDLY THAT VOLUME OF AID FROM US WAS LARGEST OF ALL. MOBUTU SAID THAT DURING RECENT GISCARD-BREZHNEV TALKS LATTER HAD PASSED WORD THAT "BEGINNING NEXT YEAR" ZAIRE WOULD HAVE NO REASON TO FEAR THE SOVIETS -- A MESSAGE MOBUTU SAID HE FOUND CURIOUS AND MADE HIM WONDER WHAT THEY HAD IN MIND BETWEEN NOW AND THEN. I

REVIEWED RESULTS OF SOME OF MY RECENT DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON, NOTING SATISFACTION THERE THAT ZAIRE HAD OVERCOME THE RECENT THREATS TO ITS TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY. I ALSO NOTED CONTINUING INTEREST, INCLUDING THE CONGRESS, IN ECONOMIC REFORM AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN ZAIRE. END SUMMARY.

2. I MET IWTH MOBUTU ALONE AT HIS HOUSE FOR AN HOUR JUNE 25. MOBUTU WAS AGAIN DRESSED IN BATTLE FATIGUES, BUT HE WAS QUICK TO ASSURE ME THAT THIS WAS IN PREPARATION FOR A FRENCH PARACHUTIST DEMONSTRATION AFTER OUR MEETING RATHER THAN FOR A RENEWAL OF THE SHABA WAR. MOBUTU SAID HE WAS TIRED AFTER HIS LONG TRIP ABROAD, BUT HE SEEMED IN GOOD SPIRITS AND OUR TALK WAS FRIENDLY.

3. ZAIRE-ANGOLA RELATIONS: I NOTED RECENT REPORTS ABOUT SPORADIC FIGHTING IN SHABA AND ASKED WHETHER MOBUTU WAS WORRIED ABOUT A NEW KATANGAN ATTACK. MOBUTU SAID HE WAS WATCHING THE SITUATION CLOSELY BUT WAS NOT OVERLY CONCERNED AND DID NOT FORESEE SERIOUS HOSTILE ACTIVITY, AT LEAST NOT IN THE NEAR FUTURE. HOWEVER, HE WENT ON TO EXPRESS PESSIMISM ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR NORMALIZING RELATIONS WITH ANGOLA, NOTING THAT RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN LUANDA (E.G., ATTEMPTED COUPT) UNDERLINED THE SEVERITY OF NETO'S TROUBLES WITHIN HI OWN PARTY AND ARMY. MOREOVER, UNITA WAS, IF ANYTHING, GROWING STRONGER AND EXPANDING ITS AREA OF OPERATIONS. IN THIS RESPECT MOBUTU CONFIRMED THAT SAVIMBI HAD RECENTLY MOVED TWO UNITA BATTALIONS INTO NORTHEAST ANGOLA ALONG

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THE ZAIRIAN BORDER WITH THE INTENTION OF ATTACKING HENRIQUE DE CARVALHO AND OTHER ANGOLAN TOWNS IN THE AREA CONTIGUOUS TO SHABA. MOBUTU AGREED THAT SAVIMBI MIGHT NOW BE LESS INCLINED TO SEEK AN ACCOMMODATION WITH NETO THAN HE HAD BEEN IN THE PAST; IN FACT, MOBUTU SAID, IN APRIL HE HAD RECEIVED A LETTER FROM SAVIMBI ASSERTING THAT HE WAS FINISHED WITH TRYING TO SET UP TALKS WITH NETO AND WOULD HENCEFORTH RESORT SOLELY TO ARMS. MOBUTU SAID ALL OF THIS INDICATES THAT NETO'S PROBLEMS ARE JUST BEGINNING AND PROSPECTS FOR HIS BEING ABLE TO WORK OUT AN ARRANGEMENT WITH ZAIRE WERE THEREFORE NOT PROMISING. MOBUTU MADE NO COMMENT IN RESPONSE TO MY OBSERVATION THAT THERE ALSO SEEMED TO BE LITTLE DIMINUATION OF FLEC ACTIVITY IN CABINDA.

4. OAU SUMMIT: MOBUTU CONFIRMED THAT HE WOULD PERSONALLY ATTEND THE OAU SUMMIT BEGINNING JULY2. HE ALSO CONFIRMED WHAT I HAD INFERRED FROM FOREIGN MINISTER NGUZA'S COMMENTS (REFTEL): WHEREAS ZAIRE WOULD NOT TAKE THE INITIATIVE IN MAKING AN ISSUE OF THE SHABA INVASION AT THE OAU, MOBUTU HAD ALREADY ARRANGED WITH OTHER MODERATE LEADERS THAT THEY WOULD RAISE SHABA AND THEREFORE ENABLE ZAIRE TO RESPOND AS THE OFFENDED PARTY.

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4306
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
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AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
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5. SHABA AFTERMATH: MOBUTU SAID THAT FOLLOWING THE OAU, LATER IN JULY, HE WOULD CONTINUE HIS VISITS TO OTHER COUNTRIES TO THANK THEM FOR THE HELP IN REPELLING THE SHABA INVADERS. HE MENTIONED SPECIFICALLY HIS PLANS TO VISIT THE CAE, SUDAN, EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA. AT THIS POINT HE NOTED, RATHER POINTEDLY I THOUGHT, THAT OF ALL ZAIRE'S FRIENDS WHO HAD HELPED (AND THEREFORE SHOULD BE THANKED) THE US HAD PROVIDED THE GREATEST VOLUME OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE. I DID NOT RESPOND TO THIS OBSERVATION, AND MOBUTU WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE HOPED NGUZA WOULD BE ABLE TO SEE ADMINISTRATION AND CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS IN WASHINGTON DURING SEPTEMBER'S UNGA. MOBUTU SAID HE ALSO INTENDED TO SEND EMISSARIES TO CHINA AND IRAN.

6. RELATIONS WITH SOVIETS: IN THE CONTEXT OF OTHER GOVERN-
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MENTS' RESPONSES TO SHABA, MOBUTU SAID HIS AMBASSADOR IN PARIS

HAD JUST BEEN BRIEFED BY JOURNIAC ON GISCARD'S RECENT TALKS WITH BREZHNEV. MOBUTU SAID THE MOST INTERESTING -- AND PUZZLING -- POINT WAS BREZHNEV'S DESIRE TO ASSURE MOBUTU THAT "BEGINNING NEXT YEAR" ZAIRE WOULD HAVE NO REASON TO FEAR THE SOVIETS. MOBUTU SAID HE FOUND THIS ASSURANCE CURIOUS, NOTING WITH A SCOFF AND A LAUGH THAT IT MADE HIM WONDER JUST WHAT THEY HAD IN MIND FOR THE REST OF THIS YEAR. HE HAD ASKED HIS AMBASSADOR TO SEEK CLARIFICATION FROM THE FRENCH.

7. ECONOMIC REFORM AND HUMAN RIGHTS: I TOLD MOBUTU THAT DURING MY RECENT CONSULTATIONS IN WASHINGTON I HAD BEEN IMPRESSED BY THE SENSE OF RELIEF AND SATISFACTION THAT ZAIRE HAD OVERCOME THE THREAT TO ITS UNITY AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY POSED BY THE SHABA INVASION. I ALSO SENSED A WILLINGNESS TO CONTINUE HELPING ZAIRE MEET ITS URGENT ECONOMIC AND SECURITY NEEDS, ALTHOUGH OBVIOUSLY THERE WERE CONCERNS AS TO HOW FAR WE COULD OR SHOULD GO, PARTICULARLY IN THE CONGRESS. NOTING THAT I HAD MET WITH SENATOR CLARK, REP. DIGGS AND OTHER MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, MOBUTU ASKED WHAT IT WAS THAT BOTHERED THEM ABOUT BEING MORE HELPFUL TO ZAIRE. AMONG SEVERAL FACTORS I MENTIONED, I STRESSED PARTICULARLY CONGRESSIONAL CONCERN THAT THE ZAIRIAN GOVERNMENT WAS NOT TAKING SUFFICIENTLY STRINGENT MEASURES TO GET ITS ECONOMY BACK IN ORDER; THAT RESOURCES WERE NOT ALWAYS BEING USED IN WAYS THAT WOULD BENEFIT THE MASSES, PARTICULARLY THE RURAL POOR. I ALSO SAID HUMAN RIGHTS REMAINED A CONCERN, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF OUR IMPORTANT ECONOMIC AND SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS IN ZAIRE. MOBUTU LISTENED AND DID NOT SAY MUCH, OTHER THAN TO REITERATE HIS DIFFICULTY IN UNDERSTANDING WHY ZAIRE SHOULD BE SO CRITICIZED WHEN OTHER COUNTRIES WITH MORE SERIOUS HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS (SUCH AS ALGERIA, WHERE BEN BELLA HAS BEEN A POLITICAL PRISONER SINCE 1965) DID NOT SEEM TO CONCERN US NEARLY AS MUCH.

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8. COMMENT: IN CONTRAST TO MY PREVIOUS TALKS WITH THE PRESIDENT, HE DID NOT SEIZE THE OCCASION TO COMPLAIN ABOUT OUR LACK OF SUPPORT DURING THE SHABA CRISIS. WHILE THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT HE IS ANY LESS UNHAPPY WITH OUR RESPONSE, I BELIEVE IT DOES INDICATE A PRAGMATIC DECISION NOT TO DWELL ON THIS ISSUE TO THE POINT OF INHIBITING CONTINUED COOPERATION IN OTHER AREAS. THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT MOBUTU CONTINUES TO VALUE THE POLITICAL AS WELL AS ECONOMIC ASPECT OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP, AND IN THIS CONNECTION IT IS EVIDENT FROM THESE AND OTHER COMMENTS HE HAS MADE TO US RECENTLY THAT HE VERY MUCH WANTS TO VISIT THE US. THIS IS AN ISSUE WHICH HAS BEEN DEVELOPING FOR SOME TIME AND WHICH I WILL SUBSEQUENTLY ADDRESS IN GREATER DETAIL.

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